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# THE TORQUE•TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS

OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980



**Volume IX • Number 8**





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Volume IX, Number 8

June 1991

William E. Olson, Editor • 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235



## *Miscellaneous Matter*



In accordance with my usual practice, this issue is dated "June" even though it is quite clear, as I write this, that you will receive it in July. The next one will be "July". There will be no "August". (Remember, this is not a monthly publication - it comes out nine times per year, and that is as much as I can possibly do.)

Those of you whose memberships expire on August 31 will receive a renewal notice in August.

PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO RENEW NOW —  
WAIT UNTIL YOU RECEIVE THE NOTICE

I expect the dues will be the same for 1991-2 as they were for 1990-1 but at this point I am not sure, and will not have any chance to review this question before the first week of August. Some people have already sent me checks, which I assume are intended to be renewals. Some sent too much money, some to little. This only confuses things and makes my life more difficult. Please wait until you receive the notice, then pay up promptly.

### **CARS AND FLOWERS**

Last year saw a modern record for precipitation in Columbus, and we had a fairly damp spring in 1991. This seems to have caused wildflowers to grow and bloom along rural roadsides in Ohio in greater profusion than I can remember. You won't see them much along the Interstates, but from the less-travelled state and county roads, where nobody bothers much about the vegetation between the edges of the berms and the pastures or cornfields, a beautiful display can be seen. This can make even a Monday morning tolerable. Many of these plants are thought of as weeds, but of course a weed is only a plant that grows where you don't want it, and the persistence of these species can be a blessing to the observer like me and a curse to the gardener trying to extirpate them. (Ever try to get rid of morning-glory, nightshade, vetch, peppermint, etc., etc.?) This year I decided to look through a book on wildflowers in an attempt to find out what I was seeing, and found that a number of the widespread and showy species are not native



**FOUNDED BY DAVE LEWIS**



to the U. S. Queen-Annes-lace (white), chicory (blue), daylily (orange), crown vetch (pink), and of course the common dandelion, are examples. Curious, isn't it, that there are as many "foreign" flowers along the sides of the roads as there are "foreign" cars on the roads. So far as I know, however, there are no Japanese wildflowers in Ohio.



Gary Stafford (#588) says that a forthcoming issue of Special Interest Autos will have a feature comparing a '38 Century coupe with a '38 La Salle coupe. The Century is one of Gary's cars. Watch for this. "My adrenalin was really pumping," he says, "When I was side by side with the La Salle; for a second I visualized a little speed contest, but reality told me that the photographer could not take pictures at 80 or 90." Doubtless the Century would have won. Gary is contemplating work on his '37 66-C and/or his '38 87 (a very rare model) as soon as the docs finish operating on his neck, which — I believe — he hurt in a hunting accident years ago, and which has been aggravating him considerably lately. Best wishes, Gary; maybe you'll be able to read about your own car while you recuperate.



Your chances of getting your car, or even your face, on the cover of Time, say, or even the National Enquirer, are likely not very good. However, you can get on the cover of this publication. Each month I wonder where the pictures are going to come from, and if I get out of the membership one decent cover car photo for each issue I feel lucky. The best shots are glossy prints, color or black-and-white, that have good contrast and no distracting background. Keep the background simple, unless it is in



## COVERS



FRONT COVER: Howard DeRusha (#689) of Edmonds, Washington owns this beautiful dark blue 1938 Century sport coupe.

BACK COVER: A 1937 Special convertible coupe and happy driver are shown in this GM publicity photo. She ought to be happy living in a place like that. Note that the car has a 1936 Michigan license plate, and that the young lady is wearing a stylish hat as all ladies did in those days. Various devices, now probably fallen into disuse, were employed to keep those hats positioned correctly when the ladies drove convertibles. (Photo from Applegate & Applegate.)



*Two more views of Howard DeRusha and his 1938 Century.*





the middle distance. Contrast is important. Remember that I must convert everything into shades of gray, and thus value (i.e. the relative distance from pure black on one end and pure white on the other) is more important than color. A dark car looks best against a lighter background, and vice versa. A beige car, for example, against a light gray wall may look OK in color, but translated into a black-and-white half-tone the picture is a bust because the car tends to disappear. Look at the pictures of Howard DeRusha's Century coupe in this issue. In the rear three-quarter view, the car is sharply in focus and well-lighted, but the background is distracting. In the side view, the car (and Howard) looks nice, but the dark green foliage is a bit too close in value to the dark blue car. These are not bad pictures, but a different background would make them better.

Most members are thrilled to see their cars on Torque Tube covers. If you follow the simple rules above, and your car is half-way presentable, you can be among the thrill-getters. Send me some pictures.

— Bill



#### MISCELLANEOUS MUSINGS ON MOTOR FUEL

I continue to be apprehensive about the impact not only on the antique car hobby but also on our workaday lives, of environmental legislation and the promotion of other Great Causes. I have not yet been able to figure out what "reformulated gasoline" is going to be, or exactly what the effect of the Clean Air Act of 1990 on motor fuel generally will be. Perhaps no one really knows. It appears, however, that in certain urban areas, considered by somebody or other to have too-high concentrations of "pollutants", gasoline formulations will be changed over the next few years.

At least "reformulated" gasoline will still be gasoline. Chrysler recently announced that in 1993 it will have a car that can run on 100% methanol, in addition to blends of methanol and gasoline. Methanol, in case you don't know or have forgotten, is "wood alcohol." At one time, I believe, it was in fact made from wood. It differs from ethanol, or "grain alcohol," in being highly poisonous and corrosive. Most of us can take down a few belts of ethanol and end up tipsy; a few belts of methanol and you're blind, or dead. Running cars on methanol cannot, to my mind, be supported on grounds of economy: at least at present, the stuff costs a good deal more than gas, and delivers far fewer miles per gallon. Nor can it be supported on environmental grounds: combustion of methanol brings forth its own array of nasty by-products, e.g. formaldehyde. (Olson's Principle of Noxious Matter, or the Law of the Conservation of Shit, is still in effect.) Can it be supported on grounds of "ending our dependence on foreign oil", a Great Cause if ever there was one?

As I have said before, I do not like the ever-growing movement in the direction of alcohol-based motor fuels, but what about "ending our dependence on foreign oil?" Wouldn't that be a good idea? Grow all our motor fuel out on the plains, or make it out of coal, turn all the tankers into floating hotels, and tell the sheiks to take a hike?

I suggest to you that, in a nation known for embracing Pipe Dreams, this is one of the Biggest and Best Pipe Dreams of Modern Times. The people in favor of substituting alcohol for gasoline are chiefly (a) farmers; (b) railroads; (c) world-savers and cause-embracers of various kinds; and (d) politicians who sense a significant constituency made up of (a), (b) and/or (c). The interests of (a) and (b) should be obvious. (Of course, they are not in favor of substituting something else for diesel fuel.) Add to them, not foreign oil shieks, but foreign gas sheiks (or generals), about whom more later on.

In my opinion there is no plausible alternative to dependence on foreign oil and nothing wrong with it in any event, and we ought to put that Great Cause into the same class as Pots of Gold at the End of Rainbows. There is one hell of a lot of crude petroleum in the Middle East, and there seems little possibility that its price can be driven to exorbitant levels again by the exporting nations, as it was once. (The current price is high enough to bring those nations riches upon riches, if they do not get any greedier, a proposition that is plain enough to King Fahd.) The United States and its traditional allies have demonstrated that they can and will intervene militarily to protect the stability of supply, with devastating effectiveness. We must be prepared to do that again, if necessary. The public ought to recognize that, in today's world, protecting the supply of petroleum from the Middle East is as much in our national interest as repelling invaders from our borders would be. Perhaps, at bottom, the public really does recognize that, and therein is one basis, at least, for the outpouring of "support the troops" sentiment, even though the Persian Gulf War was dressed up as the "liberation of Kuwait." (Kuwait turns out to be no more worth liberating, on grounds of moral principle, than, say, Angola or South Vietnam.) The people who screamed "No Blood for Oil" are, if they sincerely believe in this slogan, to my mind ignorant at best, if not dismissable as incorrigible nuts. The plain reality of things is this: there is nothing more important to the modern world than petroleum, and if that is not worth the spilling of blood when necessary, then nothing is.

I do not think we should refrain from trying to develop domestic sources of petroleum, but all such attempts will be difficult and controversial, and may well cause more problems than they solve. The current debate here is over a proposal to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration. To say that such a proposal is environmentally sensitive is perhaps to make the understatement of the year. Although an "energy bill" containing such a provision recently came out of the Senate Energy Committee, it is unlikely to go farther in its present form. At the least, opponents will demand, and probably get, more mandated "conservation." That Great Cause will in this case doubtless take the form of another upward movement in the CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) standard. This was rejected by the Energy Committee, which I consider a sound decision even if not a politically viable one. CAFE now requires auto makers' fleets to average 27.5 miles per gallon. Much beyond that, and I believe we will be well into an area of greatly diminishing return. Automobiles have already become, by and large, too small, too complex, and too expensive to suit me.

One hitherto-unmourned casualty of the trend to ever-smaller and lighter vehicles (not to mention the squeezing of maximum bodies into commercial aircraft) is the person who has the misfortune to be larger than average in height and girth. Those of us who must shop for suits at Harry's Big and Tall find few modern cars that we can drive any distance with safety, not to say comfort. Recently I had occasion to attempt a Chevrolet Cavalier; trying to drive this motorized roller skate reminded me of trying to take a crap on an airplane. Recently also, I undertook to outfit my No. 1 Son with a pickup truck. At 6' 4" and 225 pounds, he could quickly narrow the range of choice to the "full-size" Chevy or Ford: he could not fit into anything else. So much for "conservation" — it cost me a good deal of money. I wonder what sorts of cars Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson drive — maybe they are chauffeured around in limos.

I doubt that much more fuel economy can be squeezed out of automobile engines by technology, and we are already at the point where they are outrageously expensive to repair, and difficult even to service. (Changed any plugs or oil filters lately?) Thus higher CAFE means more little dinky cars with little dinky engines. The people in favor of this (a) live in cities like Washington and go to work on the "Metro" or (b) see no connection between their own behavior and their view of what everyone else ought to be doing. Out here in Ohio, nobody except a few arrested-development cases is driving around just for the hell of it. We're driving cars because we need to get somewhere for a reason, and there ain't no other way to do it; many of us, like me, have hundred-mile round trips just to go to work. We don't want more little dinky underpowered cars where you must turn off the AC to go uphill; what we want and need is decently-driveable cars and an assured supply of reasonably-priced gasoline.

That some risk of environmental harm attends the extraction and transport of crude petroleum cannot be doubted, but that risk seems to me less in the Middle East than many other locations, and risks attend damn near everything. Huge quantities of crude petroleum have been shipped around the world, and the amount spilled has been a miniscule fraction of the amount shipped. Granted, the spills are nasty when they occur, but more can be done to minimize the dangers. The Exxon Valdez event would never have occurred if Exxon had had enough sense to staff the vessel with competent people and recognize that the captain had an alcohol problem. The Alaska Pipeline has worked well. The risk of shipping huge quantities of alcohol around don't strike me as negligible, either. That leads me back to methanol.

Let's take a harder look at methanol. According to Amoco Corporation economist Theodore Eck: "...the more you learn about it, the less you like it." I agree. The yakking about methanol began years ago, when the Great Prophets decided you could make it from coal. Remember that? "Syn-fuels?" The economics of "syn-fuels" vanished. Methanol can also be made from natural gas. (Nobody is talking about making it from wood anymore.) But U. S. gas is relatively expensive. Moreover, proven reserves of U. S. natural gas are only large enough to last another nine years at the current rate of use, and many electric utilities are considering switching from coal to natural gas to achieve compliance with the new Clean Air Act.

That means foreign natural gas, folks, made into methanol overseas (because no U. S. company will want to go through the environmental shredder of trying to build a plant in the U. S.), and shipped here in tankers. Indeed, it would surprise me not at all that much of the propaganda for methanol comes from foreign suppliers. So, are we going to end our dependence on foreign oil by substituting for it a dependence on foreign gas? Maybe from Libya? That is a Preposterous Notion if ever there was one.

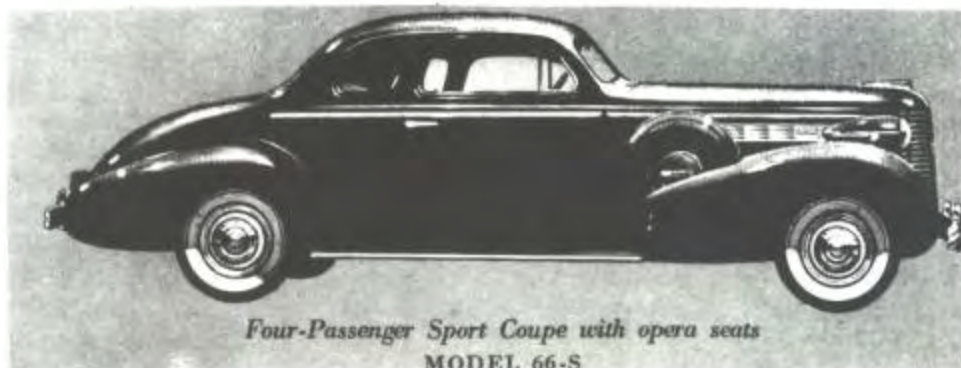
Add to that the following: (1) 40% of the energy content of natural gas is lost in making methanol from it; (2) methanol delivers fewer miles-per-gallon than gasoline; (3) burning methanol yields formaldehyde, bad stuff in anybody's book, in far greater amounts than burning gasoline; (4) methanol is highly toxic and — this is important — is soluble in water. Think about that last one for a few minutes. Gasoline and crude oil may cause big problems if spilled or leaking, but they do not dissolve in water. The potential for contamination by a water-soluble toxin shipped in huge quantities in ocean-going vessels, barges, tank cars and pipelines is enormous.

If after considering all of that you think methanol is the motor fuel of the future, your elevator, I submit, is not going all the way up.

Perhaps much of the alcohol-fuel fever stems from the apparently-widespread dislike and distrust of "Big Oil." In not-inconsiderable measure, the oil companies themselves are responsible for this, having created for themselves a thoroughly bad-ass



image, but they are no worse, to my mind, than banks or insurance companies, which no one seems to hate with the same vehemence, and considerably better than, say, the Internal Revenue Service. Like them or not, the Big Oil Boys have done a pretty good job of extracting, shipping, processing into myriad forms, and delivering the commodity without which we'd be back in the Pre-Industrial Age. Gasoline is the proven-best fuel for automobiles of all ages, and there is no rational reason why we ought not to stick with it.



# **Buyin' and Sellin' and Travellin' On**

## **HOW TO BUY A CAR**

**By Bill Gillespie (#874)**

Seeing that the Editor has been yelling at everybody to send something in, I thought I might give a go with a story on how I obtained my Buick. I've been in the antique car hobby just a year now. The bank had more money than I had knowledge or time for restoring an old car, so I bought a '55 Chevy in mint condition. That was fine until I went with a friend to a pre-war antique car get-together at Mt. Dora, Florida. Mt. Dora is located about 40 miles northeast of Orlando. It is a small, quaint and beautiful town; located there is the Lakeside Inn, a beautiful old hotel. Every year around the first weekend in April this get-together happens. That was my first introduction to what I might call "the past": RCA Victrolas playing; ragtime bands; a '20s and '30s fashion show. It was definitely back to the past — just great. I fell in love with the '30s cars.

Upon my return to Jacksonville, I started my hunt for a pristine '30s car. Ultimately through Hemmings I found an ad for a 1938 McLaughlin-Buick. I soon found out what a McLaughlin was, and was intrigued — up until then, I had no idea that Buicks were made in Canada. I then did what you're not supposed to do: I agreed to buy the car over the phone, with only a photograph to look at.

The car was in Winnipeg, Manitoba and I was in Jacksonville, Florida, and there are about 1800 miles in between. This '38 was said to be restored, engine and all, so,

I thought, why not just go to Winnipeg, get in, and drive back. Well, as you no doubt suspect, all my friends thought I was crazy, and I suppose they were right. At least, I'm young and foolish, and I didn't think much about it, but I did arrange to meet the owner of the car in Grand Forks, North Dakota — slightly closer to home. (I wasn't sure what would be involved in crossing the border, either, and was happy to leave that to the former owner.)

At 4:30 PM on a Friday I was on the road to Florida. Three days later I arrived in Jacksonville at 6:30 in the evening. I thought this was pretty good time, and nothing went wrong: apparently the "force" was with me. Since then, approximately 11 months ago, I have had a great learning experience and am getting more knowledgeable every day.

As I go to antique car shows, I am finding out that if you travel more than a couple of hundred miles in a '30s car you will at least win "longest distance travelled." I have had my carburetor and distributor rebuilt and the '38 gets up and "hauls buggy" like I was told it should.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** So far as I know, Bill Gillespie is our only member on active duty with the U. S. Navy. Bill is a Chief Petty Officer at the Naval Air Station (Cecil Field) in Jacksonville, and as seems fitting for a member of the Armed Array, is intrepid enough to buy a car over the telephone and then drive it home for three days. He didn't say what happened to the '55 Chevy. He also didn't say what kind of license plates he put on the Buick after he obtained in North Dakota a car formerly registered in Canada, but I guess there are ways to solve that problem, including ignoring it altogether.

Speaking of intrepidity, I know a young man who did all of the following: (1) drank a lot of beer at the Charlotte Auto Fair this past spring; (2) snuck into the Kruse auction on Saturday night; (3) bought a '64 Falcon at the auction for \$1000, then (4) found out that Kruse doesn't take credit cards; (5) raised the \$1000 in cash from his buddies who fortunately had sold a few parts, then (6) found he couldn't get any temporary plates for the Falcon on Saturday night; (7) sobered up on Sunday, drove it all the way back to Columbus, Ohio without any license plates at all and without incident; (8) sold it two weeks later for \$2300. The Kruse people, deciding to take what they could get under the circumstances, did not ask my young friend for the \$40 bidder's fee, which he had finessed by climbing up the back of the grandstand. It obviously pays to be young and foolish.



## HOW TO SELL A CAR

By the Editor

Bill Gillespie's story about buying a car reminded me about the time, now some four years ago, when I sold the '37 Special I'd had for a couple of years. I found out a lot through that experience. Among other things, I discovered that there are at least two categories of phoney "buyers", the "be-backers" and the "photo collectors." I also found out that — regrettably — it probably does not pay, if the car has some deficiencies, to describe them too accurately over the phone.



The car did have some deficiencies. It had good oil pressure and never overheated, but it smoked a little when first started (probably valve guides), was rusty underneath, had a few small holes in the floor, and had some old repaired body damage that did not seem very serious to me. If I mentioned any of these things to a prospective buyer over the phone, he seemed immediately to lose interest. I finally concluded that so many sellers exaggerate or downright lie that the truth teller is simply not believed. If you say "It smokes a bit when you first start it up" the other guy immediately assumes that it burns a quart of oil every 13 miles. The best thing to say is something like this: "It's hard to describe cars over the phone because different people have different ideas about what's important; come and look at it, and make up your own mind."

I also concluded after a time that there is a whole class of people who never buy anything: they just look, and pick, and then tell you they'll "be back" to you. These "be-backers" are typically retired dudes and they travel in pairs, inspecting and finding fault with old cars. Frequently they are missing several teeth, and those that remain are in bad condition. Frequently also, they know more about your car than you do. "That ain't the right steering wheel." "You say that's a '37? Looks like a '36 to me. Delbert Beasley had one just like it." "Looks like it got hit in the right side." On and on. They pick over your car, then get into their beaters and drive away, talking — presumably — to each other about how crappy your car was and how cleverly they spotted its faults. If one of them found a \$5000 car priced at \$500, he might buy it, but I'm not sure. These shit-kickers cost me two days of vacation before I wised up.

I mailed out perhaps 20 photos of the car before it dawned on me that there is another whole class of photo-album boys, and that there is a reason why smarter people than I was put "Photos \$5.00" in their "for sale" ads. Somewhere out there are thousands of people with books of photos they scammed out of sellers, showing pictures of the cars these guys pretended they wanted to buy. One guy called me from Texas and wanted a photo. I remarked that he was quite a distance away; he said he was an airline pilot and landed in Dayton at least once a week, and would call me as soon as he came into Dayton again. Uh-huh. I was dumb enough to believe that one. I'll bet half of these album-boys don't even spend the money to subscribe to the old-car publications that the ads appear in. Every day they're on the phone to the public library to see if the latest issue of Hemmings or Cars & Parts is in. Why in hell anyone would want to collect pictures of other people's cars I don't know, especially pictures obtained under false pretenses, but I don't know why some people collect bottle caps either.

Eventually I sold the car, and it was a curious experience. In retrospect, I think the guy who bought it had made up his mind to do so before he even saw it, and that he had a good reason for doing that. At that time — I think it was June of 1987 — my price had already come down from \$5500 to \$4500, which was of course "less than I had in it", but more like what it was really worth. The guy called one afternoon. "Still have that '37 Buick?" I said I did. "Home tonight?" I said I would be. "I'll be there around 7:30." He asked no questions on the phone, other than how to find my house.

By this time I had learned that it might help to start the car and run it for 10 minutes or so beforehand, and that is what I did. At 7:30 two guys appeared in a beat-up Dodge station wagon. I forget the town they were from, but it was up on the Lake near Port Clinton, a good two hours' drive from Columbus. They looked over the car, and we drove it around for 15 minutes or so. It started easily, made no smoke, and ran fine. When we got back, they looked some more but asked very few questions, and by that time I had learned not to answer unasked questions.

One of them said, "Would you take \$3750?"

"Well, I'll tell you," I said, "if its still here in September, I might trade it for a collection of Barbie dolls, but as of today, that won't make it."

"How about thirty-nine-fifty?"

"How do you plan to pay?"

Out of his pants pocket he fished what in the old gangster films was known as a "wad". I saw portraits of Benjamin Franklin and Ulysses S. Grant. This guy, I thought, is loaded for bear, and there's no need to worry about checks. Benjamin and Ulysses were talking — calling — to me.

"Those are two of my favorite Great Americans, friend. Count out thirty-nine-fifty's worth of 'em and it's a done deal."

He laid 'em down on the top of the garage freezer. I counted only thirty-nine. "I think you're short one U. S. Grant," I said.

"Oh." He then took a fifty out of his wallet, leading me to conclude he'd really planned on thirty-nine, and was hoping I couldn't count or that the sight of all those Great Americans would temporarily cloud my brain. (He was close to correct on the latter.)

I asked when he planned to return for the car. He said he planned to drive it home that night. "I doubt we can get the title notarized tonight," I said.

"No problem. My mother's a notary, and she'll take care of it tomorrow. Just sign it."

I then noticed that while we'd been talking, the other guy had been busy removing my license plates from the Buick and substituting a set of Ohio dealer plates. Somewhat against my better judgment, I signed the title certificate and handed it over. We shook hands. "Thanks," I said. The first guy got into the Buick and backed out of the driveway, followed by the second guy in the Dodge beater. I waved as they pulled away, clutching the money firmly in my other hand.

By then it was pretty dark, and a light rain was falling. I had forgotten to tell them, I thought, that the headlights were not too bright and the rear lights didn't work at all.

I walked into the house with what must have been a shit-eating grin on my face. "You sold it," my wife said.

"Sure did," I said, holding up the wad, "and he drove it away."

My son Laurence, then about 18, was plainly intrigued by the sight of hundred-dollar bills; he'd never seen one before. "Can I see the money, Dad?"

"Sure, son," I said, and put it down on the kitchen table. "Look, but don't filch."

"He drove it away?" my wife said, seemingly incredulous at what she thought foolhardy behavior. "Where is he going?"

"Somewhere up by Port Clinton."

"My God, it's dark out. It's raining. It's a hundred miles up there. He'll never make it."



"Oh, I think he will. Besides, that's his problem. And I expect they have a tow bar in their station wagon, anyway. Too bad the tail lights don't work, though."

My dear wife still could not accept that I had actually exchanged the Special for almost four thousand dollars of real cash money, and that the car was really gone. "It will break down," she said, "I know it. He'll come back."

"I don't think so," I replied, "but we'll be prepared in case he does."

Laurence has a nice 6-mm varmint rifle. "Laurence," I said, "you got ammo for the six-millimeter?"

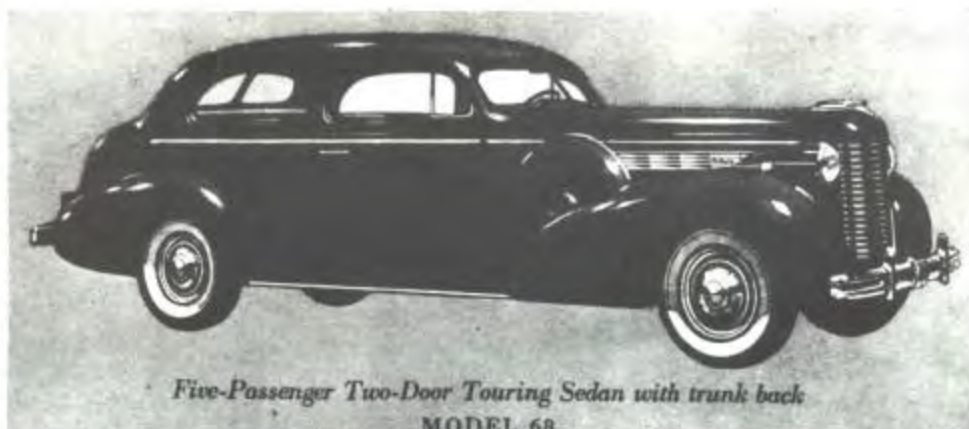
"Yeah."

"Go up to your room. Load it. If you see a '37 Buick or a beat-up Dodge wagon pull in the driveway, open fire. If there's a Highway Patrol car behind 'em, miss."

"No. No. NO!" My wife was screaming, practically in tears.

Laurence was laughing like hell.

Needless to say, I never saw the guy again. I've never seen the '37 Special again, either. I expect he had a buyer for it, and turned a quick profit. I never asked his name, and it's probably just as well I didn't. If one of you has a dark green 1937 model 47 with a few patched holes in the floor, we might have an interesting conversation.



## HOW TO GET HOME AFTER YOU'VE BOUGHT THE CAR

By Lou Wildt (#245)

As some of our members know, after I retired from Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati several years ago, I thought I'd be able to get to work on my project car, a 1938 model 46-C. However, I'd put off so many other things until after I'd retired that at one point I thought I'd have to retire from being retired. Nevertheless, the convertible was finally finished, and I took it to a number of shows, including the BCA National in 1990, where some of you may have seen it. Toward the end of 1990, I decided that the car was really too good to drive, and I advertised it for sale. As things turned out, however, its new owners did not share that opinion.

Last March, I sold the car to a couple from Salt Lake City, Utah: Chuck and Jan Sparrer. They flew in from Salt Lake City on Friday, March 22. On Saturday, they looked at my 46-C and decided to buy it. Their flight home was not until Monday, so they decided to do some sight-seeing around Cincinnati and Lexington, Kentucky, and complete the deal on Monday. While in Cincinnati they were introduced to Montgomery Inn ribs and Cincinnati chili, two of our Ohio specialties that I guess you won't find in Utah.

The Sparrers had not decided how they would get the car home. The weather was very nice the entire weekend: sunny, dry, and in the mid-70s, way above average for March. This apparently prompted a decision early Monday morning that they would drive the car back to Utah. We went to have title transferred, purchased temporary tags, changed the oil, and checked all the fluids. Chuck called his insurance company to have the car covered. We packed the car with their luggage and some spare parts: coil; distributor; fuel pump, etc. By then it was Monday afternoon. They dropped off their rental car at the Cincinnati Airport and headed west toward Indianapolis.

The Southwestern Ohio Chapter B.C.A. meeting was held that Monday evening. When I arrived, a member from the Indianapolis area said, "Lou, you won't believe what I saw on the way over here. There was a '38 just like yours, with a lady driving, headed toward Indianapolis on I-74."

"Jack," I said, "you won't believe it, but that was my '38."

Chuck and Jan and the 46-C left Cincinnati on Monday afternoon, March 25 and arrived in Salt Lake City on Saturday, March 30. Marj and I knew that beautiful weather would not last. It didn't. We watched the national weather reports on TV, and saw storms develop in the West that began to move eastward.

Later, we received a long letter from Chuck and Jan detailing their adventures. They've agreed to allow the Club to reprint that letter, so here's the rest of the story from Chuck and Jan Sparrer.

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Lou and Marj,

I thought I would give you a rundown on our trip back and how the Buick ran. Our trip back to Salt Lake was great. We will not do it at that time of the year again because of the weather. In fact, the only problems we had on the entire trip were weather-related. The car performed flawlessly. You can pat yourself on the back for an excellent mechanical restoration. We had two very minor problems with the car. The first was the speedometer noise which you had warned me about. That really did not show up until the second day and I was able to fix it with some W-D 40 which I shot down the cable, and cleaning the speedometer itself. From that point on it was silent. The other problem was the windshield wipers. They stopped working in Nebraska. We solved that problem by not driving in the rain.

On our first day we drove to Danville, Illinois arriving there around seven P.M. The drive was easy and the weather beautiful. The temperature gauge on the Buick stayed just below 180 degrees and we averaged 14 miles per gallon of gas. We found a motel on the eastern side of town, covered the car and settled in for a good night's rest. About 4 A.M. we awoke to a downpour. It rained and it rained until about 6 A.M. Then it cleared and the weather was beautiful. Now our problem was what to do with the car cover, but that was quickly solved. The ladies at the motel put it in their dryer while Jan and I had breakfast.



The next day found us in Des Moines, Iowa. The driving had been much harder because of constant head winds. We averaged just 12 miles per gallon and our first quart of oil. The temperature was holding at a solid 180 all day.

The third day we left Des Moines hoping to make Grand Island, Nebraska. When we left Des Moines there was a light fog and it stayed that way until Council Bluffs. Just outside Council Bluffs the temperature began to drop, the winds started blowing, and big black clouds were forming overhead. It looked, at first, as if the storm might be moving just to the north of us, but that was not the case. Jan kept saying to stop and put my coat on, but I said "no way". I wanted to keep going as long as the weather was good. As we entered Omaha it began to rain and before long it turned to snow. We stopped for gas on the western end of town and were told that I-80 was closed at Grand Island. Since it was before noon we really didn't want to stop so we thought we would try for Lincoln, but by the next exit we realized that the conditions had gotten too bad to continue. So we pulled off and checked into the only motel. It was cheap but so dirty you wouldn't believe it. We stayed there about an hour and Jan finally said, "I just can't stay here over night". They refunded our money and we headed back to the next freeway exit. This time we drove on the shoulder at about 30 mph because of the visibility. The truckers were going 80, but for us the ice was freezing to the windshield and driver's side window. It was snowing sideways because of the winds. After about 3 miles we were at the same exit that we had gotten gas at 3 hours before. We pulled off, found a nice motel and immediately turned on the weather report. It turned out to be a fast moving storm and the next morning we were on our way.

The next morning when we awoke it was clear and very cold: 20 degrees to be exact. The car started on the first try. At 6:30 we were on our way. The temperature gauge did not reach 180 until noon and the outside temperature did not reach 32 until breakfast at McDonald's at Kearney, Nebraska about 10:30. There was about a foot of snow on the ground, but the roads were clear and dry. That day we covered lots of miles and made it to Laramie, Wyoming. With one tank of gas we averaged 17 mpg, but I may not have filled it all the way to the top. We stayed at the worst Holiday Inn I have ever seen so we were ready for another early start the next morning.

The next morning we were anxious to get started because it was a fairly easy drive home. There was only one problem: those nasty clouds were starting to form overhead. The Denver weather report said a fast moving storm was coming in from the Northwest and would hit Denver in the afternoon. We were 110 miles Northwest of Denver so we wanted to get out of the way before the storm arrived. It didn't work out that way. About 10 miles out of Laramie signs were posted warning of winter storm conditions, but the road was open. Another 10 miles or so down the road a light snow began to blow. Again it was snowing sideways, but driving conditions were fine. At least for a while. Now we began to climb and the higher we climbed the more it snowed. We climbed to about 9000 feet and the road conditions were terrible. So we drove on the shoulder going slowly and letting the few cars on the highway fly by us. Before long we passed one that had spun out and was on the side of the road. At that point we decided we would stop at the next exit regardless of what services were there. We did, and there was a Texaco gas station. It was 8 o'clock in the morning and the owner had just arrived. I did not know where we were, but I did know that there was a covered place to park the car and some heat inside the station. Inside the station the owner was just starting to build a fire in his wood stove. It was an interesting stove: two 50 gallon drums, separate and stacked above each other. I don't know who designed it, but it sure worked great. It was really a lot of fun warming up around the stove, talking with the young man whose car had spun out on the ice and listening to the police reports on road conditions and accidents. It was soon to become a busy day for the station owner as he operated a towing service. About 10 minutes after we arrived a call came through for him to come to a truck jackknife accident 5 miles west of the station.

Before long there were about a dozen people in the station: four truck drivers; the highway patrol; people on their way to work on ranches in the middle of nowhere; and a couple from Nebraska on their way to Salt Lake. The station owner's wife had arrived with their little girl to watch the station while her husband was out with the tow truck. She decided that we should spend the night in an old hotel in Elk Mountain, Wyoming. It was just two miles away down a dirt road. She offered to take us and to call ahead to make sure there were rooms available. The couple from Nebraska decided to go with us. It was about an hour and a half before she was able to get away. While we waited Jan played cards with the little girl and I talked to the truckers and the highway patrol. The truckers were the drivers of the rig that jackknifed down the road. Before long the wrecker came in with the truck and then the drivers were back in the cab ready to go on down the road.

About 10:00 o'clock we were driving down the dirt road through a foot of snow following a '77 Ford 1/2 ton pick up. Two miles later we stepped back in time 100 years. Nobody was at the hotel so we went over the bridge to the general store. It was spotlessly clean and full of antiques. The shelves were stacked with the minimum needs of a true general store with things like overshoes, used books and cookies. The antiques included a 1923 gas pump that metered out a gallon at a time that had to be put into a can then into the car. The owner said they only made that model for one year. I see why.

At this point we were really hungry, not having had breakfast. The coffee shop did not open until noon, however by now the whole town knew about the '38 Buick and the owner of the coffee shop came over early. So we had an early lunch with the couple from Nebraska. Before long the county Sheriff came in for lunch and I could hardly wait to find out what he knew about the storm. I looked outside and the snow was coming down in huge lazy flakes. He said that 10 miles down the road the snow was gone. I couldn't believe it. We discussed going on with the other couple but decided to stay. So we drove back to the hotel. It was interesting having been built in the 19th century as a stop on the Overland Trail. It was interesting, but filthy, and I knew it would be hard for Jan to spend the night. Guess who was there, the county Sheriff, and he decided we should continue on to Rawlins. He followed us down the mountain on back roads until we were out of the snow more or less. As we left Elk Mountain the whole town was out to see the Buick and waving goodbye. Before long we were back on I-80 heading to Rawlins. The only problem was that the snow was starting again. So we spent the night in Rawlins.

The next morning was clear and cold. The temperature at the gas station was 19 degrees. We drove to Rock Springs before the car's temperature gauge reached 160. Boy, were we cold without a heater. My hands wouldn't even move. We had breakfast at McDonald's in Rock Springs and then we were on our way to Little America, Wyoming for gas. This time we averaged 15 mpg and I added 1/2 quart of oil. A few hours later we were home, the weather was beautiful, and we were warm at last.

We drove almost 1800 miles and averaged 14.5 miles per gallon. We used 1.5 quarts of oil. We had no mechanical breakdowns. The car ran great all the way.

Sincerely,

Chuck and Jan Sparrer



CONTINUED ON P. 16





Here are two views of a nice looking '37 Special four-door owned by Joe McKee (#433) of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Notice, in the rear view, his appropriate Wyoming license plate. In keeping with Western tradition, Wyoming uses the word "pioneer" on its antique car plates; the cowboy and "bucking bronco" have appeared on Wyoming plates for many years.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Our thanks to Lou Wildt and to the Sparrers of Salt Lake City for sharing this entertaining story with us. I am continually amazed at how intrepid some old-car nuts can get. The Sparrers' comment about snow blowing sideways reminded me of a time several years ago when I was in Cheyenne, Wyoming. There was about four to six inches of snow on the ground, but the sky was clear. I was eating lunch in a motel dining room, and chanced to look out a window. All that could be seen was solid white. My God, I thought, a blizzard has come up suddenly and I'll be stuck here for days. Twenty minutes later I saw cars and buildings outside the window, but there was no snow left on the ground: one of those Wyoming breezes had picked up the snow and blown it into Nebraska. In the summer, of course, it blows sand and gravel, and I understand that in some parts of Wyoming the old-car people just put their engine blocks outside instead of having them sandblasted. Auto glass and air filters are big business there. The natives don't think it's very windy until they can see whitecaps in their toilet bowls and an iron log chain hung from a pole stands out perpendicular to the pole.

The Sparrers' story also reminded me of another one, involving, I believe, members of this Club; at present, I have only hearsay and no official confirmation -- perhaps confession would be a better word -- from the participants, but understand that it involves persons from southern California who assumed that December weather in Milwaukee would be the same as December weather in Los Angeles. These intrepid souls undertook to drive an unrestored 1937 Limited home from Wisconsin in the third week of December, innocently believing they'd be back in time for Christmas. My information suggests that they did not make it, but, as I say, I have only hearsay. I think it is now time for these Californians to tell their tale, several months having elapsed since the geography lesson was applied. How about it, guys? I know who you are.



#### WHY YOU DID IT

We conclude this little series of articles with a short piece by Clint Preslan (#461), which he calls

#### FIX 'EM WITH NEGATIVES

"Whatta ya want somethin' like that for? It's old and worn out and you can't get parts. What? Well, even if you can find some, they'll cost a fortune. You could buy somethin' new for what this piece a' crap'll cost."

"It's got over 75,000 miles? Nahhh....the engine's shot. No brakes, either. Lookit that shredded upholstery. Forget it!"

"See, the metal crystallizes in these old cars. You can't trust 'em....dangerous as hell. They'll gobble your money an' you'll still have nothin' after all your hard work. Get yourself somethin' newer an' safer."

"Okay, okay. Hey, you're gonna throw it away with both hands. Yeah, go ahead....you might as well shove your cash down a rathole."



If you listened with an open ear and backed away from your crusty, exciting discovery, be reminded: The Torque Tube does not showcase gourmet recipes and old Buicks are active throughout your system.

If you swept the warnings aside with a scornful sneer and hauled your treasure home, then why in Heaven's Name do you still like old cars? Haven't you "wised up" yet?

"Why would anybody put all the time, effort and money into an old Buick like this? Yeah, it's nice, real nice, but lookit that hubcap....what'd it cost you? Fifty, sixty dollars? Sixty dollars for a goddam hubcap! If I had a car like this, I'd keep it in my living room. I'd be afraid to sit in it, let alone drive the sucker. An' you're out here on the road?"

"Jeeze, this's a neat car but I bet you don't drive it much. Heats up, doesn't it? An' you can't go out at night 'cause of these old lights....you can't see crap, right? Drives like a truck, too, I'll bet....

"Whatta ya want somethin' like that for?"

Because you do.  
You know;  
They do not.  
Old cars belong to the Spirit  
As well as the mind.  
You have to know to see.



*Recently three Washington, D.C.-area members took a little tour and posed their cars before some historic architecture. Shown here left to right are: 1937 model 46-C owned by Ben Berman (#579); 1937 model 40-C owned by Andrew Diem (#852); and 1938 model 61 owned by Charles Jekofsky (#524). (Photo by Andrew Diem.)*





## THE GOOD OLD DAYS



Suburban living in Florida back in the Good Old Days. If you had some money, back in the late 1930s and early 1940s, before Admiral Yamamoto launched his airplanes toward Pearl Harbor, life could be pretty decent. For one thing, you could employ your own chauffeur to keep your Buick clean. The obviously well-heeled owner of this '38 Roadmaster probably had several household servants in addition to the chauffeur, who is here seen on the far side of the hood applying himself to a bit of dusting. (Note that he, too, has his hat on.) This is another example of the striking portfolio of scenes from American life done by photographer Marion Post Wolcott, circa 1940. (See last issue's back cover.) Initially, Wolcott's assignment with the Depression-era Farm Security Administration was to document the widespread rural poverty of those days, but by the end of the decade the work had been broadened to include the full panorama of *Vita Americana*. These photographs are now in the Library of Congress, from whence this one was obtained by Bill Shipman (#617).



# TECHNICAL TIPS



## SOLVING A BRAKE PROBLEM

By David Bylsma (#117)

I took my car out of winter storage, lubricated everything to get ready for some summer-time fun, and went out for a little drive. When I came back, I noticed that my brake lights were on. As I was standing in my garage, next to my work bench, there was no way, I thought, those lights should be on. I got back into the car and tried to move it. The car would not budge.

So I started to check the problem out. I jacked up one rear wheel at a time, and could not turn either one. Next I jacked up the front wheels, one at a time. I could not move the front wheels either. It seemed obvious that the fluid had been pushed from the master cylinder into the lines, but could not return to the master cylinder. Three things might cause this type of problem. First, the hose from the frame to the torque tube: however, if this was the problem only the rear brakes would be stuck, and since that hose is between the brake light switch and the rear wheels, the lights probably would not remain lit. Thus, I eliminated this as a cause. Second might be (on a large series car) the hose from the master cylinder to the distributor fitting on the frame; if that hose were blocked, all the wheels would lock up. Third might be the master cylinder itself.

I then broke the connection between the rear of the master cylinder and the hose. When I did that, all four wheels broke loose, so I figured the problem was in the master cylinder itself. I took it off and cleaned it out, put a new kit in it and put everything back together. Then I ran into another problem: the brakes would not pump back up. I found that I had an air lock in the master cylinder, and it would not pull fluid from the top reservoir. I took the master cylinder back off, opened the back of it, and poured fluid right into it. I pumped it on the work bench until it seemed to work right, put it back in the car, bled all the lines, and then went out for another ride. After about 30 miles, the brakes began to lock up again.

I thought about the problem and decided that maybe it was the hose from the master cylinder after all. When these hoses get old, sometimes they will swell enough, especially in warm weather, to block return of the fluid to the master cylinder. I found a replacement for this hose, put it on, bled the lines again (I'm using a good deal of fluid up here), then took the car for another drive. Again the brakes locked up. Damn!

Now, I thought, I have eliminated all possible causes except the master cylinder itself. But what could it be? I'd just finished fixing that up. Then I remembered that my father had once told me he'd had the same problem on a car he owned. The problem was that the piston in the master cylinder was not returning all the way, and was covering the brake fluid return hole inside the cylinder. This must be my problem. I got under the car and pulled the rubber boot on the front of the master cylinder forward so I could view the piston. I had my son push on the brake pedal, then release it. The piston seemed to be returning all the way, so, I thought, the return hole must be plugged up.



Once more, I took the master cylinder off and took it apart. Looking inside, I saw two return holes; one is about .125 and the other about .025. The only thing I could find small enough to poke through the small hole was a sewing needle. The holes were clear, but when I put all the parts back into the master cylinder, I found that the rubber seal that goes in front of the piston was covering the hole. That told me that the piston was too long. Since I did not get a new piston with the kit, it must have been that way all along. Somehow it had worked before, but perhaps over the winter the old seal had swelled enough to begin causing trouble. The new seal in the kit may have been just a bit bigger than the old one was originally, and thus continued the problem.

I took the piston to a machine shop and had them machine about one-eighth of an inch off of it. That allowed the rubber seal to return past the fluid return hole. My advice to everyone is: always check the fluid return holes after you put the piston and rubber seal in; and, before you screw the back cover on the master cylinder, always pour some fluid into the cylinder.



### HOW MASTER CYLINDERS WORK

David Bylsma's story suggested to me that a short rundown on the operation of brake system master cylinders might be useful. Accompanying this is a series of diagrams from the 1937 Shop Manual, which are very helpful in understanding how they work. (I modified the diagrams slightly to show the rubber parts in black.)

Mechanical brakes were relatively simple when cars did not go very fast and brakes operating only on the rear wheels were good enough. Four-wheel mechanical brakes were a never-ending source of trouble, as anyone knows who had a beat-up 1930s Ford when he was in high school. The chief problem with hydraulic systems was leaks; and that is why Henry Ford refused to put them on his cars. (Buick was a little slow to catch up with hydraulic brakes, too, but not so slow as Henry. In fact, Henry himself never did catch up, and it took getting the old man into permanent retirement to get decent brakes on Ford cars.) However, it was not difficult to contrive systems that were fairly-well resistant to leakage with some attention to proper maintenance. The great advances made in chemistry during the 1920s and 1930s provided the appropriate fluid.

Let us start with the proposition that liquids are relatively incompressible. If pressure is applied to a liquid, it will move if it has a place to go, and that is, of course, why hydraulic systems work. The master cylinder serves as a means of building up pressure in the system and as a reservoir to maintain a constant volume of fluid. When the brakes are applied, a variable amount of pressure can be introduced into the system, depending upon how firmly one pushes on the pedal. The master cylinder consists essentially of two parts, a horizontal cylinder in which a spring-loaded piston works back and forth, and a fluid reservoir atop the piston. When the pedal is depressed, the push rod (A) is moved into the cylinder, forcing the piston (B) and the rubber cup (D) against the spring (M), in the direction of the rear plug (H). As soon as the rubber cup covers the compensating port (C) between the cylinder and the reservoir, pressure is built up in the cylinder, which forces fluid through the holes in the check valve (J). This pressure is then applied to each wheel cylinder, through the pipes and hoses of



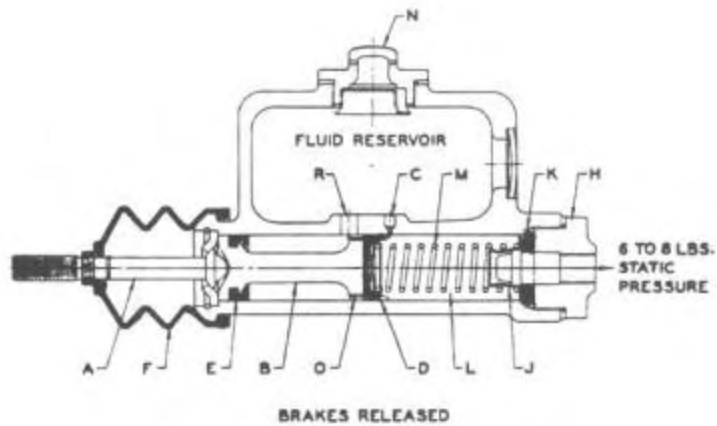
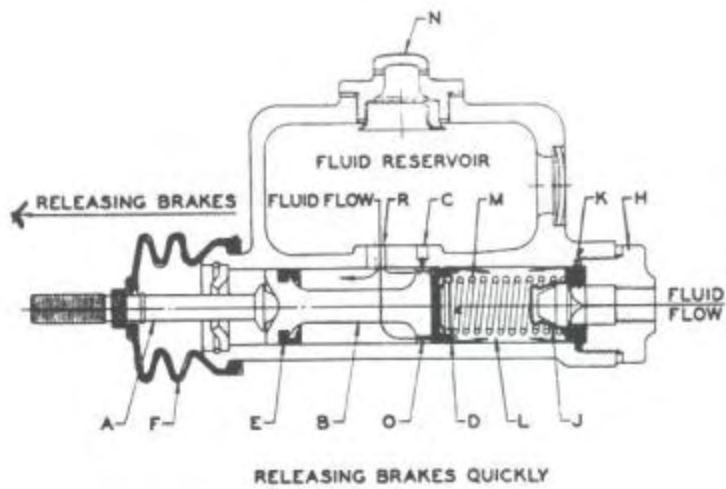
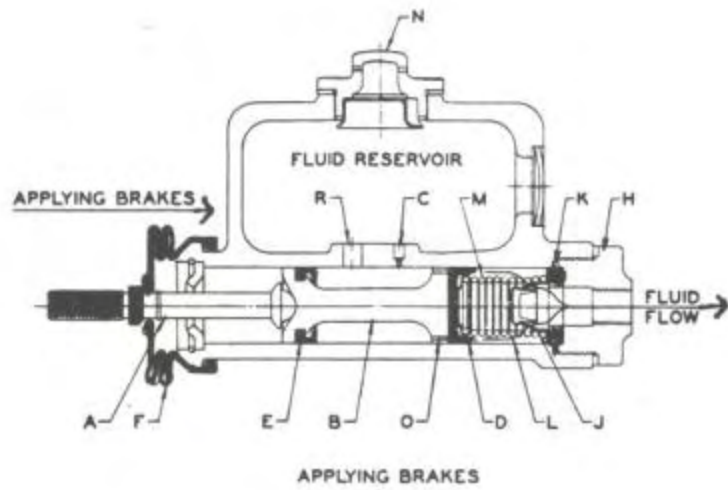


Fig. 5-1. Master Brake Cylinder

the system, causing each wheel cylinder piston to move outward, which in turn forces the shoes against the drums. At this point the pressure in each wheel cylinder is the same as in the portion of the master cylinder between the rubber cup end of the piston and the rear plug; as noted above, the pressure is proportional to the force exerted on the brake pedal by the driver's foot.

When the force on the brake pedal is diminished but not removed (i.e. you "ease up" on the brake), the spring pushes the rubber cup and piston back toward the released position, and fluid will return from the wheel cylinders. It returns because there is always a static pressure in the system. For fluid to return into the master cylinder, the fluid must push the check valve (J) away from its rubber seat (K), and pass between the seat and the valve. (Fluid can move through the holes in the check valve only in the "out" direction. The spring always maintains enough tension on the check valve to keep a static pressure in the system of 6 to 8 pounds even with the brakes fully released.)

When the pedal is released quickly, the spring returns the rubber cup and piston to the released position before the cylinder is filled by return flow from the wheel cylinders. In this case, fluid from the reservoir will flow into the cylinder through the port (R), through the little holes in the piston (O) and around the edges of the rubber cup, thereby keeping full the portion of the cylinder between the cup and the end plug. As fluid returns from the wheel cylinders, the increased volume will enter the reservoir through the compensating port (C). (You will note that of the two holes, or ports, between the cylinder and the reservoir, the compensating port is the smaller.)

If the piston does not return all the way, or if for some other reason the compensating port remains covered by the rubber cup when the brakes are released, the applied pressure will remain in the cylinder and the brakes will drag. That was David Bylsma's problem. His car may have had an "aftermarket" piston that was sold for use in several applications, but was just slightly too long to work in the Buick. Alternatively, the rubber cup may have been slightly too large. Another possible cause for this problem is incorrect adjustment of the pedal linkage; the pedal travel must be sufficient to allow the piston to come fully to the front end of the cylinder when the brakes are released.

I had a different kind of trouble with a rebuilt master cylinder. This had been sleeved with brass. I found that the inside diameter of the sleeve was a hair too small. This caused the piston to hang up, and prevented fluid from moving around the edges of the rubber cup from the piston side. This was solved by increasing the inside diameter of the sleeve very slightly with a brake cylinder hone.

It will be observed that the correct inside diameter of the cylinder is critical. If too large, fluid can be forced past the rubber cup to the piston side when the brakes are applied, resulting in insufficient or no pressure. If too small, the problems mentioned above can occur. When things are right, fluid should move past the cup from the piston side, but not in the opposite direction. That is a consequence of the physical shape of the cup: when pressure is applied from the spring side, it tends to press the flange, or lip, of the cup outward, sealing it against the cylinder wall. It will also be observed that the two ports (C) and (R) must be clear at all times. A very small piece of foreign matter can plug one of them, especially the compensating port, which has a very small diameter.



## MORE BRAKING POWER FOR 40- AND 60-SERIES CARS

(Vol. I, No. 5, Page 14 - May 1982 - rewritten)

This "tip" was sent in by Bob Pipkin (#076), who knows Buick repair and restoration inside and out. In the process of working on many cars, Bob has developed several invisible modifications that improve reliability and adaptability to modern roads and driving conditions. This is one such series of modifications.

1. Giving your 1937-38 series 40 a little more braking power is a matter of bolting on stock components. Use all four brake drums, shoes, springs, retainers and backing plates from a '37 or '38 60-series car. This will increase brake width from 1-3/4 inches to 2 inches. The hardest part of this is finding a 60-series parts car. (Buick should have used this modification, but apparently did not, in the "police" and "taxi" packages for 40-series cars.)
2. By using 1940 series 60 and 70 brake components on the '37-'38 series 60, you can increase brake size from 2 inches to 2-1/4 inches. Again, use the drums, shoes, springs retainers and backing plates.

If you really want to "go for bear" on both the 1937-38 series 40 and 60, try this:

3. Use the complete brake assemblies from 1941-49 series 60 and 70 Buicks, including the front hub and spindles. This gives 2-1/4 inch brakes front and rear and the added bonus of larger front outer wheel bearings.
4. With all the modifications discussed above, use the larger front wheel cylinders from 1942-49 series 40, 50, 60 and 70. (You can also use these without other modifications.) These are easier to locate if you are searching for NOS parts. (Note: Since Bob wrote this article in 1982, we discovered that NAPA carries a good replacement for the original 40-series wheel cylinders. I suspect there is a NAPA replacement for the '42-'49 cylinders also.)

All of these modifications have worked well on Bob's cars. They require no special tools or machine work.



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## QUESTIONS



**QUESTION:** I have seen tail lamp housings matched to the color of the body, left "natural" in naked steel, or chromed. Which is correct?

**ANSWER:** I assume you're asking about '38. All '37 tail lamp housings were painted body color. 1938 housings have a decorative molding around the opening where the lens protrudes. This molding was plated, and the balance of the housing was painted body color. The housings and moldings are zinc alloy (not steel) and it is virtually impossible to remove the molding without ruining it, or breaking the housing, or both. Thus to re-plate the molding one has to have the whole assembly plated. Some people leave them that way. Some paint the housing, but that is a problem because paint does not adhere well to chrome. The best way to handle this is to tell your plater to polish only the molding, not the housing. That will leave a rougher finish on the housing. If the whole assembly comes back polished, scuff the housing with one of those scuffing pads, and in any case, prime it with DuPont Self-Etching Primer (615-S and 616-S) or equivalent. That will ensure good paint adhesion.

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### HOW I DID IT - PART V

By Jim Rufener (#767)

I'm back at the shop at National Bushing in Mora, Minnesota. Dan, my engine rebuilder, says that he's inspected the oil pump and can find nothing wrong with it, and that everything that did not need work looked very good, like a 30,000-mile engine. I stayed there the morning of September 29 while Dan was finishing the engine. He put the head, oil pan, bell housing and clutch on, which would save me some work later on. I loaded the whole thing in my '78 GMC pickup for the trip back to my pole shed, where I unloaded it with the engine hoist I'd borrowed from my neighbor. I'd previously picked up the transmission from the transmission rebuilders and painted that black.

I cleaned the engine thoroughly with enamel reducer, gave it a light sanding, cleaned it again and went over it with compressed air. I then masked off areas not to be painted, primed it with Vari-Prime, and finished with "Engine Green" that I'd had mixed from the Club formula. (It was a job masking off the exhaust manifold, but since everything had been put together I did not want to disturb it.)

Using the engine hoist on the transmission, I attached that to the engine. I did not have or make any aligning pins for the two top bolt holes, but I'd recommend using them; aligning pins would have made the job a lot easier.

On October 7 my faithful friend Charles Scott and I got the engine safely into its mountings and tightened down. That was a very good feeling.

Fortunately, Dan Stassen, my engine rebuilder, agreed to come up on two Sundays in October and help me. I sent Dan under the dashboard to start connecting the wiring harness to the right connections. He brought along some brake line tubing and fittings and connected my oil filter to the engine. Like a number of other members, I'd decided I'd be happier not relying solely on that screen over the take-up float, and I obtained a filter cannister from a later-year Buick engine — I think it was a '48. The bracket for this filter attaches to the push rod cover. (Some Buick filters attach high up on the front of the engine, but these did not seem as suitable for use on the '38 engine.)

I had thought of using flexible lines — which would make it possible to take off the cover without draining and disconnecting the filter — but the brake line tubing looks much neater.

I happen to be a fan of Phillips Trop-Arctic oil. We filled the engine with 5W-30 and added some to the filter canister before securing the cover. Dan had already put the No. 1 piston on TDC, so we did not need to get that into the right position for installing the distributor. Before doing that, we spun the oil pump (which is driven off the bottom of the distributor drive) using a screwdriver blade in a reversible and variable speed drill (you put the drill in "reverse"). Dan operated the drill and I watched the oil pressure gage. Pressure came up almost immediately. I felt good about that! It took a while longer before we could see oil come out at the rocker arms, but it finally did. Now the distributor went on, and all the wires were connected up.

Now for the moment of truth. I slip behind the wheel, turn on the switch, turn on my electric fuel pump. She turns over, but won't start. We move the distributor a bit and try again. She spins a few times and takes off. Oh, boy, did that ever sound nice! No exhaust leaks; oil pressure up. Dan did some adjusting on the carb, and we let it run for a while and just listened.

A can of radiator flush had been added to the water on the first fill. After the engine had run for 20 minutes or so, I drained all the water out. I then added warmed water to the radiator, ran the engine for another 10 minutes, and drained it again. I saw no sign of leaks. I then added water pump lubricant, distilled water that I'd bought at the local grocery store, and anti-freeze. With all my Buicks, I've always added a can of rust inhibitor and water pump lubricant once a year. This takes care of the cooling system. I could find no problems with the water pump and no signs of corrosion. In draining the system, I attached lengths of plastic tubing to the block and radiator drains with little spring clamps. The tubing was routed into a container on the floor. This saves making a mess.

Around mid-November I stopped operations for the winter — it gets cold here in Minnesota! Remaining to do is some wiring and work on the generator and regulator. As I said when I first started writing about the '38, I'm no professional but have worked on Buicks since way back when. (I also have an airframe and powerplants license, and worked on aircraft for 15 years in the Navy.) Perhaps someone will say "I know a better way". That's OK. I just hope that my experience will help some other members to gain the inspiration and confidence they need.




1927  
to  
1953

## WIRING HARNESSSES

AUTHENTIC REPRODUCTION WIRING SYSTEMS THRU 1953  
HANDCRAFTED WITH THE FINEST MATERIALS

EACH SUPPLIED WITH: LIMITED WARRANTY  
INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS  
SCHEMATICS

ALSO OFFERING:  
WIRING SUPPLIES  
BRAIDING SERVICE  
CATALOG OR  
INFORMATION \$2



BOX 435 WAYNE, PA 19087



# Classified Ads



## PARTS FOR SALE

1938 Special parts; Used unless noted. Radio grill & map light (fair/good)--\$15; horn ring & bezel (poor)--\$2; cigarette lighter element w/knob--\$5; inside mirror--\$2; throttle cable complete--\$5; throttle cable, knob & inner cable only--\$2; hood center strip(good)--\$20; trunk license light assembly for coupe, no trunk handle (good)--\$15; trunk handle (sedan?) no lock (excel)--\$5; headlight guts, no reflectors, pair--\$10. headlight shell, no trim, right--\$1; O.S. door handle--\$2; hub caps(fair/poor)--\$2 ea; windshield wiper transmission (L) needs plating--\$5; w/wiper motors, cond?--\$2 ea; w/wiper arms--\$2 ea; w/wiper blades(NORS Globe universal)--\$1 pr; battery box--\$10; clutch & brake pedals & shaft--\$5; pair brake pedal grommets 9.775 1297900 (new)--\$5; accellarator pedal, no rubber--\$1; clutch release yoke w/new boot \$5; radius rod bushings (only 2 for one side) 5.417 1305839 (new)--\$2; L&R steering knuckle & knuckle support assembly (bushings worn)--\$20 pr; set .020 over pistons & rods--\$50. set; thermostate housing (new)--\$5; bypass valve (new)--\$5; AAV1 carb w/choke & vacumm switch, condition unknown--\$75; AAV1 carb only, inlet needle valve sticks--\$35; carb accel. pump piston P24736 (new)--\$3; generator w/pulley--\$25; generator pulley--\$1; starter--\$25; starter relay & solenoid--\$25; fan blade--\$1; fan blade pulley--\$1; manifold pilots (5 new)--\$1; one lot of misc. int. & exh. valves & springs--\$5; transmission -- \$50; One lot of new transmission gears & parts for 40 series that includes the following; 4.421 1302958 counter gear (1934-38). 4.430 1283878 reverse idler gear (1934-38). 4.351 1394770 main shaft gear (1938) 4.414 1304521 sliding sleeve (1938) 4.417 14264124 1st & rev sliding gear (1934-38) 4.384 1305659 2nd & 3rd snyc drum (have 2) (1938-39) 4.428 1302157 shaft for counter gear (1938) 4.433 1284274 shaft for reverse idler (1938) 0.649 142655 (hyatt 99004/142655) main shaft pilot bearing(1938-39). Plus misc thrust washers, lock rings, etc. \$40. for the lot of new trans. parts.  
Literature; color brochure showing all 1938 models--\$25; fact folder--\$20.  
Interior panel patterns for conv. coupe ( I made out of heavy paper from my old panels)-- free. Shipping not included.  
LOU WILDT (#245) 2210 Trappers Knoll, Batavia, OH. 45103  
513/732-2609.  
P.S.  
1937 Special; Two 16 in. wheels. One has a like new Allstate tire. \$25. pair.

Classified ads for "casual" (i.e. non-commercial) transactions are free to members. For commercial advertising rates please contact the Editor. The Editor may edit classified ad material for length and/or clarity. Material received will be run in the next available issue. Neither the Club nor the Editor is responsible for descriptions of items advertised, nor for typographical errors.



Ring & pinion NOS 3.9:1 for 1938 series 40 & 60; 3 1938 NOS hub caps; trade only for 1938 NOS series 60 running board moldings part no. 1304727; 1938 NOS hood louvers part nos. 1304002 & 1304003; 1938 NOS bumper guards part no. 1303651; 1938 NOS fender lamp Guide 340A. THOM SCHUTTISH (#6), 460 Duncan, San Francisco, CA 94131. 415/285-8217

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#### 1937 MODEL 40

STEERING WHEEL AND HUB (NO PLASTIC)(SOME PITTING)GOOD FOR RECORE \$35.  
HORN RING (GOOD CONDITION) (MINOR PITTING) \$45.  
MASTER HEATER (CASE AND CORE) NO MOTOR OR DEFROSTER, RESTORABLE \$25.  
GAS TANK STRAPS(4)\$15.  
MOTOR MOUNTS (2) \$20. SET  
SPLASH PAN (LEFT SIDE ONLY) \$45.  
MAP LIGHT COVER \$8.  
HOOD LATCH HANDLE (NICE CHROME) \$15.  
TAIL LIGHT COVER \$6.  
INTERIOR LIGHT (ROUGH) PLASTIC GOOD \$10.  
GAS CAP (CHROME) \$8.  
RADIO DASH COVERS (2 PIECES) \$35.  
INTERIOR DASH LIGHT SWITCH \$5.  
2 HEAD LIGHT POD (INSIDE RINGS) RESTORABLE \$20.  
PARKING LIGHT (PAIR)(RESTORABLE) NO LENSES, CHROME PITTED \$25.each.  
HEAD LIGHT CHROME STRIP \$15.  
NOS GRILL BUG SCREEN \$200. OR REASONABLE OFFER.  
CLOCK (UNSURE IF IT WORKS) \$25.  
HEADLIGHT DOORS (PAIR) (ONE INSIDE CLIP BROKEN)(NEEDS RECHROMING) \$35.  
RADIO DASH SPEAKER GRILL (MINOR PITTING) \$30.  
STEERING COLUMN LOCK ASSEMBLY (NO KEY) \$35.  
LICENSE PLATE LIGHT TRUNK ASSEMBLY (NO GLASS) \$20.  
GLOVE COMPARTMENT DOOR (NO LATCH)\$8.  
REAR VIEW MIRROR (GLASS OK - BUT NOT PERFECT, BACK RUSTY)\$8.

#### 1937 MODEL 60

STAINLESS STEEL BODY MOLDINGS (PRICES VARY) (WRITE).

\*\*\*\*UNLESS NOTED, THESE ARE NOT NOS PARTS, THEY ARE GOOD REUSABLE, RESTORABLE PARTS FOR SALE AT A REASONABLE PRICE.\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*PLEASE ADD POSTAGE OF 20% OF PRICE IN ADVANCE, LARGE ORDERS WILL BE CHARGED ACTUAL POSTAGE.\*\*\*\*

JERRY ROOT  
71 SOUTH POLLARD DRIVE  
FULTON, NEW YORK 13069  
315-593-2346

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(2) MARVEL CARBURETORS #BD-1 (FITS 1935, 1937 & 1938 MODEL 40). BOTH IN EXCELLENT CONDITION ALTHOUGH ONE HAS A BROKEN CAST PIECE ON TOP. ASKING \$60 FOR THE BEST ONE. MAKE AN OFFER ON THE OTHER OR MAKE AN OFFER ON BOTH. JERRY ROOT, #11860, 71 SOUTH POLLARD DRIVE, FULTON, NEW YORK, 13069 OR 315 593-2346 AFTER 5PM.



## PARTS WANTED

For 1938 60-C: hood center strip; bumper badge; sidemount wheel securing discs; accelerator pedal with connecting rod; set of 15" wheels. Would welcome advice regarding front & rear seats as to total replacement details. Also template of all glass replacement; running board cores. BILL DENNEY (#863). 22 Scarborough Way, Dunbogan 2443, N.S.W., AUSTRALIA

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Rebuildable starter for large series 1937, Delco-Remy model 727-W. DAVID PAULISIN (#704). 3514 Darcy Drive, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301 313/540-3562 (home); 313/531-7800 (work).

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'37-'38 ring & pinion gears series 40-60 3.9:1; '38 radio LEE JOHANSSON (825). 22 Russell Trufant Rd., Carver, MA 02330. 508/866-2395.

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## CARS FOR SALE

1938 Buick Special Convertible model 46-C. Stored 30 years. 98% complete. Will need total restoration. Body & frame good. \$12000. Call 716/346-3125 night or day. RICHARD WOODRUFF (#905).

---

1937 model 66-C convertible coupe. Sudan Blue. Sidemounts. 200 dry miles since total professional restoration. AACA Senior; BCA National 1st Place. Illness & loss of storage force sale. \$40,000. No disappointments. RANDY DOZIER (#561). Nashville, TN. 615/665-1452

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1938 model 41 Rembrandt Black. No sidemounts. 500 dry miles since total professional restoration. AACA SENIOR, BCA National 1st Place. Illness & loss of storage force sale. \$18,000 sacrifice. RANDY DOZIER (#561). Nashville, TN. 615/665-1452

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1938 model 47. Total ground-up restoration. Titian maroon. National prize winner. One of the best. \$29,500 OBO. (Much more invested in this fine car.) O.J. MISJUNS (#473). 1023 Highland Rd., Newtown, PA 18940. 215/860-8801. (IXX-8)

---

1938 model 44 two-door slant-back. Completely original. Raphael Green is thinning. Tight engine. Interior good. \$6500 OBO. GARY STAFFORD (#588). 2823 Mohawk, Ventura, CA 93001. 805/643-3181.

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## CARS WANTED

1937 or 1938 Century coupe. Other Century models considered. Wanted as a driver. LOU WILDT (#245). 2210 Trappers Knoll. Batavia, Ohio 45103. 513/732-2609.



## NEW MEMBERS



Leonard V. Mermod, Jr. (#900)  
3408 South 256 St.  
Kent, WA 98032  
206/946-1650  
'38 41

John F. Stephens (#904)  
400 S. Carlin Springs Rd.  
Arlington, VA 22204

### NEW ADDRESS

David Bylsma  
7802 Chevalier Ct.  
Severn, MD 21144

R. W. Dickeson (#901)  
4006 Kerr Cir.  
Farmers Branch, TX 75244  
214/247-7068

Richard L. Woodruff (#905)  
18 Washington St. Box 250  
Livonia, NY 14487  
716/346-3125  
'38 46-C

David Paulsin  
3514 Darcy Dr.  
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301

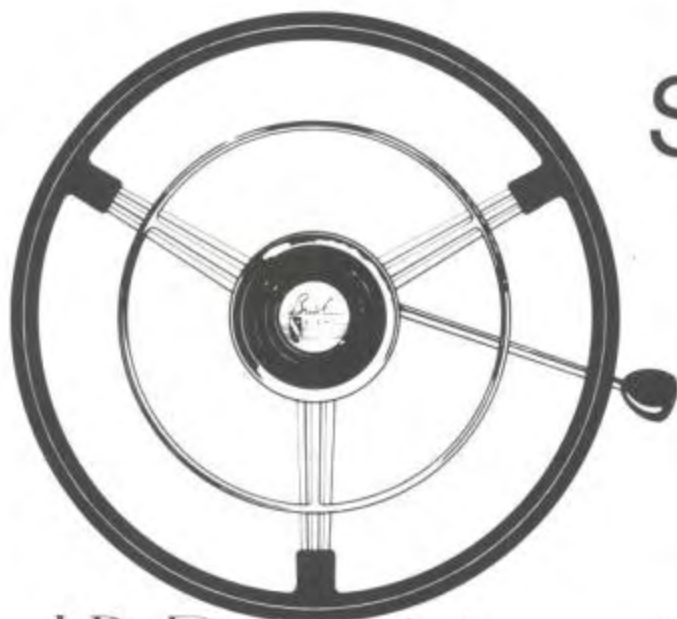
Dan Turco (#902)  
65 Davies Ave.  
Dumont, NJ 07628  
'37 46

Fred Grey (#906)  
153 Delvecchio Rd.  
Campbell River  
B. C. V9W 2T6  
CANADA  
604-287-4969  
'37 4419 McL.

Robert E. Woodcock, Jr. (#907)  
P.O. Box 410128  
San Francisco, CA 94141-0128  
415/585-9525

James C. Rider (#903)  
770 Eckford  
Troy, MI 48098  
313/689-2989  
'38 61

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1936 Thru 1947  
\$2.00 for Brochure  
Must  
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Complete your restoration with an authentic Buick interior from Hampton Coach. Each kit is made in our own upholstery shop to original specs using only the finest fabrics and materials.

Panel Kits, Headlining Kits and Seat Upholstery Kits come complete, ready to install.

We presently have kits available for many popular Buicks from 1932 to 1953 and are in the process of adding many more. Specific models available for 1937 and 1938 are as follows:

- Model 41
- Model 46
- Model 46S
- Model 47
- Model 48 (1937 only)
- Model 61
- Model 66
- Model 66S
- Model 67



## Guaranteed Quality & Fit

*Write or call today for free literature including samples and prices. Please be sure to include year and model of your Buick along with your request.*

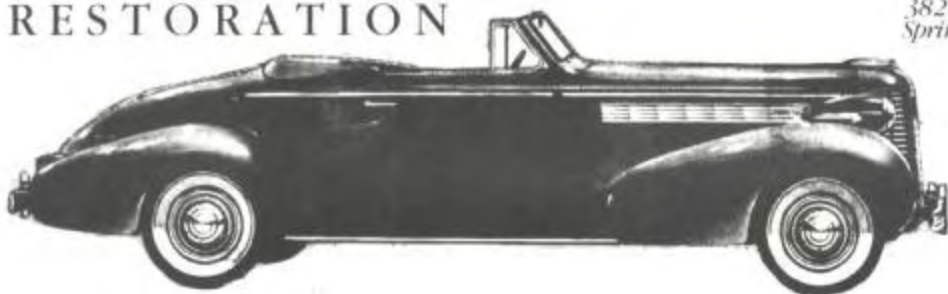


Hampton Coach Inc., 70 High Street, P.O. Box 665, Hampton, NH 03842 (603) 926-6341

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*3825 South Second Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62703  
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## **EXHAUST PIPE, MUFFLER & TAIL PIPE CLAMP ASSEMBLY**

*GROUP #3.708-3.704-3.617 PART #1302878*



This clamp set was used for both front and rear muffler applications. The set comes with two halves, 2-carriage bolts, nuts and lock washers. This clamp set will add points to your perfect restoration. Made to match original specs.

**FITS: 1937-52 BUICK, ALL FRONT & REAR  
1953-56 BUICK 40 FRONT  
1939-53 OLDSMOBILE FRONT  
1942-56 OLDSMOBILE REAR**

**\$9.95** *ADD \$3.50 for  
shipping & handling*

**DAVE LEWIS RESTORATION**

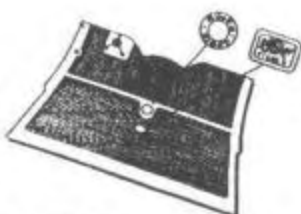
*3825 SOUTH SECOND, SPRINGFIELD, ILL 62703*

# BOB'S AUTOMOBILIA

(805) 434-2963

## 1937-38 BUICK

FRONT FLOORMAT  
1937-38 SER. 40-60  
BLACK or BROWN  
FF-378.....\$175.



### DOOR WEATHERSEAL-SPONGE

GLUE-IN.....DW-387.....\$1.70ft.  
CLIP-IN.....DW-80.....\$2.00ft.

### DOOR BOTTOM SEAL

CLIP TYPE.....DW-369.....\$1.80ft

### TRUNK SEAL-SEDANS. 1/2" WIDE

SER. 80-90.....TW-371.....\$29.50  
SEDANS. 3/4" WIDE  
SER. 40-60.....TW-371S.....\$29.50.

### TRUNK SEAL-COUPES. 9/16" X 1" SPONGE

.....TL-369.....\$2.00ft.

### CLUTCH and BRAKE PEDALS SERIES 40-60

BLACK.....CB-343BK.....\$5.00EA.  
BROWN.....CB-343BN.....\$5.00EA.  
SERIES 80-90.....CB-32BK.....\$8.50EA.  
BROWN.....CB-32BN.....\$7.50EA.

### PEDAL FLOOR SEALS; ALL MODELS

.....FS-375.....\$13.00PR.

### 1937 ONLY! ACCELERATOR PEDALS SERIES

40-60 BLACK.....AP-37BK.....\$27.00  
BROWN.....AP-37BN.....\$29.00

### SHIFT BOOT. 1937-38 SERIES 40 ONLY!

BLACK.....SB-348BK.....\$8.75  
BROWN.....SB-348BN.....\$9.75

### TIE-ROD ENDS. 1937-38 SERIES 40

LEFT HAND THREADS TE-371L.....\$27.00  
RIGHT HAND THREADS TE-371R.....\$27.00

### LOWER OUTER PIN KITS FOR SERIES 40-60

.....LO-372.....\$35.00

### FUEL PUMP KITS; SER. 40 FK-24.....\$23.00

SERIES 60-80-90..FK-116...\$28.00.

### CARB. KITS: CARTER.....CK-360C \$25.00

STROMBERG.....CK-37XS \$26.00

### VALVES & LIFTERS SERIES 40-50;

INTAKE.....V-944.....\$11.EA.  
EXHAUST.....VS-837.....\$11.EA.  
LIFTERS.....VL-1M.....\$ 9.EA.

### TORQUE BALL SEAL KIT. ALL MODELS

TBK-343.....\$26.00

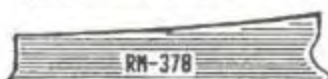
### VISOR VANITY MIRROR VM-369 \$25.(8-91)

### RUNNING BOARD RUBBER

MATS. 1937-38 SERIES

40 ONLY! REQUIRES SOME SPLICING ON INSIDE EDGE.

RM-378.....\$424.00 PR.



### RUNNING BOARD INSULATORS. 1937-38

ALL MODELS. ALL NEW MATERIAL! 4  
NEEDED PER RUNNING BOARD.

RI-378.....\$20.00 EA.



### HOOD REST PADS. 1937-38 6-8 PER CAR.

HR-378.....4.00 EA.



### DASH GLASS. SILK-SCREENED ON

BACK OF GLASS IN COLORS AS

ORIGINAL. 1937 SPEEDO.....DG-37.....\$38.

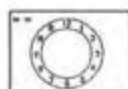
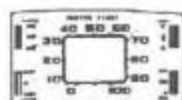
.....RADIO.....RG-37.....\$23.

.....CLOCK.....CG-37.....\$28.

1938.....SPEEDO DG-38.....\$38.

.....RADIO.....RG-38.....\$23.

.....CLOCK.....CG-38.....\$28.



### PLASTIC DASH KNOBS DK-37(38).....\$ 6.

### PLASTIC DOOR HANDLE and WINDOW

WINDER RINGS..HE-37(38).....\$ 4.



### OUTSIDE DOOR HANDLE CHROME ESC- HUTCHEONS and RUBBER GROMMETS.

1 FERRULE & 1 GROMMET PER SET.

1937 DGF-296.....\$5./SET

1938 DGF-380.....\$5./SET

### DOOR FERRULE INSTALLATION TOOL.

\$20. REFUNDABLE IF RETURNED

WITHIN 30 DAYS. DF-TOOL.....\$30.



### 1938 TRUNK HANDLE/LIGHT MOUNTING

SEAL DH-381.....\$8.50



### RUMBLE SEAT LATCH 1937-38

DL-278.....\$65.



### MOTOR MOUNT, FRONT. ALL MODELS

ROUND PADS.....SP-338...\$10.PR.

MOUNT.....MM-347..\$27.EA.



### FRONT END BUMPERS;

UPPER ALL.....UB-379...\$5.EA.

LOWER.....LB-3X0...\$22.PR.

### 1937 HUB CAPS. ALL SER.. HC-37.....\$60.EA.

16" WHEEL TRIM RINGS-TR-16S.....\$96./SET of 4

1937 or 38 HOOD ORNAMENT.....HO-3X.....\$65.



### SOME OTHER ITEMS WE STOCK; BEARINGS,

DECALS, ENGINE PAINT, DECALS, SHOP

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